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### Pollution and jobs of equal concern to Missoulians

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# UM news

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IMMEDIATELY

POLLUTION AND JOBS OF EQUAL  
CONCERN TO MISSOULIANS

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MISSOULA--

Missoula area residents still view pollution as one of the most important issues facing their community, but they show equal concern for maintaining jobs and the area's economy, according to a report recently published by the University of Montana's Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

"Missoula Area Attitudes Toward the Forest Industry" is based on an extensive survey of the Missoula area conducted between November 1977 and January 1978. Under the direction of research associate Susan Selig Wallwork, almost 1,000 survey participants were chosen at random. They proportionately represent all categories of the area population, including students.

The respondents were asked their opinions on a variety of topics, including Missoula area problems, the forest industry and its role in the area, environmental concerns, and wilderness and recreation.

Respondents said traffic congestion was the most important problem facing the Missoula area, followed closely by pollution and concerns regarding public services (including conditions of streets and highways, education, law enforcement, etc.).

According to the survey results, when asked to cite "serious problems which cause pollution or threaten the environment or natural resources," over half the respondents, 58 percent, cited the forest industry. But when asked specifically which concerned them most, protecting the environment or maintaining jobs, respondents were almost equally divided.

(over)



Pollution and jobs--add one

Forty-seven percent of the respondents said they were more concerned about the environment, while 51 percent said they were more concerned about jobs.

Survey results show, however, a large difference of opinion between students and nonstudents. Seventy percent of the student respondents preferred protection of the environment, compared to 41 percent of the nonstudent population. Students were also more impatient with the progress being made in cleaning up pollution, according to the report. Sixty percent of the students said Missoula is moving too slowly in cleaning up the environment, while only 37 percent of the nonstudents felt that way.

The report notes that although Missoula residents see the forest industry as a polluter, they also acknowledge the industry's efforts to improve the situation. Almost 50 percent of the respondents said the Missoula area environment has improved over the past 10 years. Twenty-two percent felt it had stayed the same, and 29 percent said the environment has become worse. Most respondents also think the industry is doing a better job of utilizing timber and avoiding waste today than it was several years ago. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents said the industry was doing a better job; 19 percent said "about the same," and only 4 percent said "worse."

"There is little question that the Missoula area public is aware of the importance of the forest industry," the report says. When people were asked to name two or three companies that are important to the area's economy, 76 percent of the responses referred to forest industry firms. When asked which one company was most important, an overwhelming majority -- over 90 percent -- cited a forest industry firm.

(more)



Pollution and jobs---add two

Questions regarding visits to national forests show that Missoula area residents use the forests widely for recreational purposes. Eighty-two percent of the respondents said they visited a national forest at least once during 1977. Wilderness areas, on the other hand, were used by a much smaller portion of the population. Students used wilderness areas the most (48 percent), while only 23 percent of all nonstudents said they had visited a wilderness area during 1977. Perhaps not too surprisingly, the report indicates that 54 percent of the student respondents feel that Montana needs more wilderness area, while only 39 percent of the general public feel that way.

Copies of "Missoula Area Attitudes Toward the Forest Industry " are available for \$3 from the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812.

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